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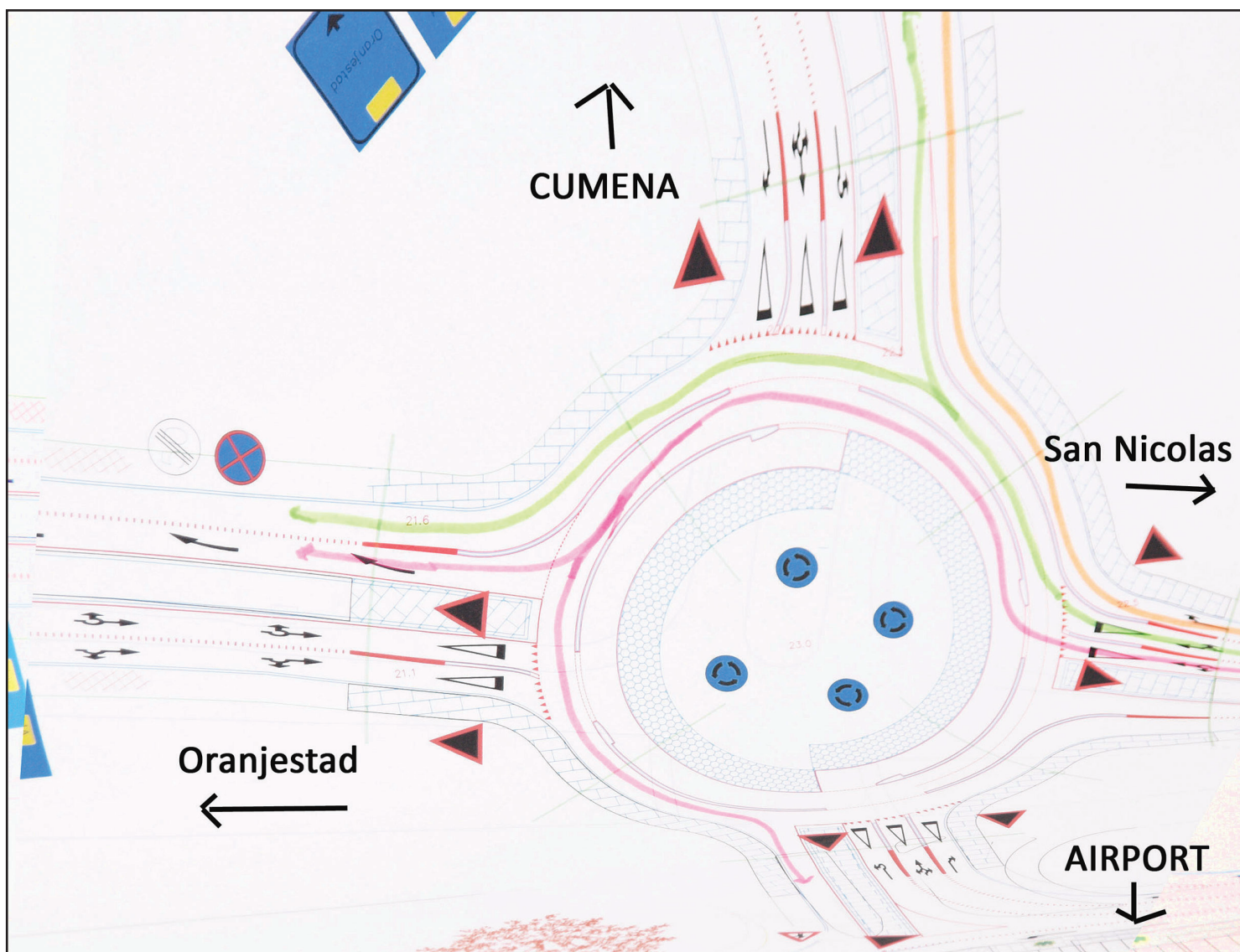
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Airport Rotunda to open on Friday!



Continued from pg 1
Police Officer Paola Goede-Kock explained that

signage will be place prominently to direct motorists. This new rotunda will be

Aruba's first three-lane roundabout and traffic feeding into the circle should take the lane that leads to their exit. Crossing lanes once on the traffic circle is strictly forbidden.

The road from San Nicolas and the road from the airport have three feeder lanes. The outside lane (yellow on the map) should only be used by those making a direct right turn. Center lanes (Green on the map) can be used for those traveling straight through the rotunda and making a right turn, but needing to stay in the left lane.

Left lanes (pink on the map) can be used for those traveling straight through, or

circumnavigating a three-quarter route around the circle. The feeder lane from Oranjestad has only two lanes, while the rest have three.

Though Aruba now has several roundabouts, this new one will be unique, and the police and DOW ask motorists to be cautious and traverse it slowly.

They are concerned about possible accidents and ask that drivers be sure to feed in the right lane when they approach it, so they will not try changing lanes if they are not in the correct lane, but would do better to go around again.

By Rosalie Klein

Parliament approves changes in Labor Laws!

Recently, during a public hearing in Aruba's Parliament the first two of five changes in Aruba's labor laws were deliberated. The changes entailed the decree of the Labor Law as well as a change in the law with respect to temporary workers.

One of the issues which received the most attention from our lawmakers was the changes in the law regarding temporary workers. The phenomena of temporary workers, known here as "uitzendbureaus" have been misused and abused by several companies because it was never regulated by law. In the future any company wishing to function as an "uitzendbureau" will need to apply for a license and thus comply with all conditions of a good employer. The law requires a temporary worker to become permanent within no more than 12 months.

After a rather lengthy meeting of Parliament, there was an approval of the changes in the law regarding temporary workers and with respect to the decree of our Labor Laws, Parliament voted unanimously to accept the changes proposed. Today we can boast that we now have the proper protection for over 80% of all workers on the island, and temporary workers also have the protection of the law on their side.

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ATA supports a good cause

Aruba Fire Brigade and Cliff Faldman to bring cheer to Breezy Point kids!



With the cooperation of ATA, AHATA, ATSA and JetBlue the Aruba Fire Brigade and Cliff Faldman have organized a "toy drive" to send toys to the children of Breezy Point, New York.

The devastation of hurricane Sandy affected a large amount of fire fighters and their families in the largest tourism market of the USA for Aruba, which is the North East. An unprecedented fire

raged through Breezy Point, New York and destroyed 111 homes, which happens to be a community where a large number of fire fighters and their families lived...they lost everything.

Faldman, co-ordinator of the project is a voluntary fire fighter in the US, who chose Aruba as his home a few years ago. Faldman is a good friend of Aruba's Fire Brigade and has often cooperated with our Fire Brigade here.

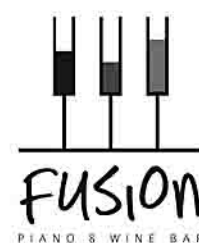
The special "toy drive" concludes on December 21st. Anyone interested in contributing to this noble cause, can pass by Certified Megamall, Top I Toys, Van Dorp and De Wit Stores where special prices are being offered for this cause. Unwrapped

gifts may also be submitted at the Fire Brigades in San Nicolaas or at Tanki Flip, or at the Airport.

All gifts should be appropriate for children ages 1 to 13. Those preferring to make a monetary donation instead of a toy, may do so at CMB account #62051708 under "Toys for Breezy Point." Or, you can also place donations in the cans available for this in the Van Dorp and De Wit Stores.

The toys will be sent by airplane to JFK Airport, New York City, thanks to the gracious cooperation of JetBlue airlines who will pick them up and distribute them to the fire brigades in Breezy Point.

The following participating stores are: De Wit and Van Dorp stores in Dakota, Mainstreet; Fantasea, Royal Plaza Mall; Cocosol Renaissance Mall; Paradise Beach Villas Mini Market; Van Dorp Occidental; Hacienda Mall; and at the airport: Van Dorp Main Concession and Van Dorp at the gates.



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WEDNESDAY

Extra chance to win a Toyota Prius with Green Dreams from Tropical Bottling



Tropical Bottling Marketing Manager Vanessa Hollander was very pleased to announce that their "Green Dreams" campaign begun in September featuring Coca-Cola products was highly successful and will soon come to a close.

Prizes were to be won by finding logo labels under the green bottle caps of all beverages from Tropical Bottling in the Coca-Cola and Sprite family. Dozens of local vendors awarded bottles of soft drink, movie tickets, Starbucks coffee and more to lucky winners.

20 of the bottle caps contained a sealer with the Toyota logo, which awarded a raffle ticket towards a drawing on December 29 in cooperation with Garage Cordia,

exclusive distributors of Toyota on Aruba, for a new



model Toyota Prius C Hybrid car, in keeping with the "green" theme of the contest.

Fortunate for dedicated consumers of the various Coca-Cola, Coke Zero, Diet Coke y Sprite, Sprite Zero only three of the Toyota logo bottle caps were recovered. As promised, Tropical Bot-

tling and Toyota will over a total of 20 individuals the opportunity to win a brand new Toyota Prius C.

Vanessa was joined by Garage Cordia Marketing Coordinator Luiza Monsalve to announce that the public has until Friday, December 21 to take 24 Green Dream bottle caps to Garage Cordia to receive a raffle ticket. On that day, between 6:00 and 8:00 PM, they will conduct a drawing to select the seventeen additional names that will have a chance to win the car at a final drawing on Saturday, December 29.

Bottle caps do not need to have a logo imprinted inside, and those wishing to obtain a ticket for a chance to be a finalist can enter as many times as they wish. The final drawing will take place during a festive night at the Renaissance Marketplace in Oranjestad. There will be treats and activities for youngsters, discounts in eateries and fun activities for the entire family.

Vanessa Hollander reminded the public that the Green Dreams campaign will come to a full close on December 31. All winning caps must be redeemed at the various participating vendors, and will not be accepted any more in 2013.

By Rosalie Klein

US lawmakers to get secret Benghazi report

Continued from pg 1

The report's unclassified section will be publicly available by Wednesday morning at the latest, added State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland.

The attack in which the ambassador, Chris Stevens, and three other Americans died, has become fiercely politicized, with Republicans alleging security failings, as well as a possible cover-up over Al-Qaeda's role.

It is likely Republicans will seek to use the report's findings to skewer the administration of President Barack Obama.

The chairman of the Accountability Review Board (ARB), diplomat Thomas Pickering, and team member Admiral Mike Mullen, the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, will brief lawmakers today behind closed doors.

Samsung is top 2012 phone brand, ousting Nokia

WASHINGTON (AFP) - Samsung has overtaken Nokia as the top mobile phone brand for 2012 and has opened up a decisive lead over Apple in the smartphone market, a research firm said Tuesday.

This will mark the first time in 14 years that Finnish-based Nokia will not sit atop the global mobile phone business on an annual basis, according to IHS iSuppli.

Samsung is expected to account for 29 percent of worldwide cellphone shipments, up from 24 percent in 2011, according to the IHS, which said Nokia's share dropped to 24 percent from 30 percent.

This will mark the first time the South Korean electronics giant will occupy the top on a yearly basis, IHS

said.

Samsung has also extended its lead over Apple as the top maker of smartphones worldwide, the survey said. Samsung will have 28 percent of the market, up from 20 percent in 2011, while Apple's share will rise in 2012 to 20 percent from 19 percent.

"The competitive reality of the cellphone market in 2012 was 'live by the smartphone; die by the smartphone,'" said Wayne Lam, senior analyst at IHS.

The report said BlackBerry maker Research In Motion will see its market share fall to five percent in 2012, from 11 percent in 2011.

IHS said it expects smartphones gains to accelerate in 2013, and to account for 56 percent of the mobile phone market.

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Dutch Kingdom concert signals optimism!



A very spirited and uplifting concert has just taken place in Holland dubbed "Dutch Kingdom Concert." Minister of Internal Affairs and King-

dom Relations, Ronald Plasterk, was on hand to welcome those present at this great concert held a few days ago in Rotterdam.



Plasterk considered the event an important encounter for the four countries in the Dutch Kingdom to meet every year. According to Plasterk, the countries in the Kingdom not only

share a history, but also a journey together into the future. He lauded the fact that we could meet in this fashion to share experiences and cultures and to get to know each other better. This he

says, will make us better people.

Present at the musical occasion were artists and groups from Holland, Sint Maarten, Curacao and Aruba. According to Minister Plasterk, this event was a signal of optimism in the Dutch Kingdom. Special performance was by Aruban born singer, Pieter Philip Monzon better known as Pete Philly.

Aruba Prime Minister invited Pete Philly to come to Aruba to perform here soon. Pete shared how proud he was to perform in this Dutch Kingdom Concert on behalf of Aruba and to raise Aruba's name above all.

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International News

US 'deeply disappointed' in Israeli settlement plans

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The United States Tuesday slammed plans being mulled by Israel to build nearly 5,000 new settler homes in annexed east Jerusalem, saying it would run "counter to the cause of peace."

"Israel's leaders continually say that they support a path towards a two-state solution, yet these actions only put that goal further at risk," State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said.

Jerusalem municipal and district committees will consider four projects this week in the Givat HaMatos and Gilo neighborhoods, said non-governmental groups Peace Now and Terrestrial Jerusalem, which track settlement construction.

The projects are being discussed after Israel on Monday gave the green light for the construction of 1,500 homes in the east Jerusalem neighborhood of Ramat Shlomo, in a move which has already drawn sharp US criticism.

The other settlement plans being weighed this week are all

in the southern sector of the city, near the West Bank city of Bethlehem.

"We are not in a good cycle here. We need to break this cycle, end the provocative actions and get these parties back to the table," she said of direct Israeli-Palestinian peace talks which have been stalled for two years.

Jerusalem is claimed by both Israel and the Palestinians as the capital of a future state, and is one of the core issues to be settled in the peace talks.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday reiterated Israel's right to increase Jewish presence in all parts of "united" Jerusalem, a euphemism for the city including its eastern sector.

"Jerusalem is the eternal capital of the State of Israel and we will continue to build in it," he said in remarks relayed by his office.

Israel captured east Jerusalem during the 1967 Six Day War and later annexed it in a move never recognized by the international community.

Petraeus lover won't be tried

WASHINGTON (AFP) - Paula Broadwell, the former lover of ex-CIA chief David Petraeus, will not be prosecuted for cyberstalking during the affair that led to his downfall, a law enforcement source said.

Petraeus, America's most celebrated military leader in a generation, stepped down on November 9 as head of the CIA after admitting to an affair with Broadwell, a counter-terrorism expert and lieutenant-colonel in the Army Reserve who had co-authored a biography of the general.

The FBI stumbled upon the affair when Jill Kelley, a Florida socialite and friend of the Petraeus family, asked investigators to look into threatening emails that turned out to be from an apparently jealous Broadwell.

The probe also uncovered potentially "inappropriate" emails between Kelley and the top allied commander in Afghanistan, General John Allen, that are the subject of a separate inquiry that has delayed his nomination to the post of NATO's supreme allied commander in Europe.

Increasingly hard to provide food aid in Syria: UN

GENEVA (AFP) - The UN's World Food Programme warned Tuesday that the spiralling violence in Syria was making it increasingly difficult to distribute food in the war-torn country.

"Food needs are growing in Syria," said WFP spokeswoman Elisabeth Byrs, whose organisation distributes most of its aid in Syria through the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC).

Citing SARC figures, Byrs told reporters in Geneva that nearly 2.5 million people currently need emergency food assistance, up from the 1.5 million estimated two months ago.

Yet WFP is only able to reach 1.3 million people each month, she said, lamenting the "escalating violence", especially in the north of the country.

WFP said in a statement it had seen a sharp rise in the number of attacks on its aid trucks in recent weeks.

Since the beginning of October, the organisation said,

armed groups have stolen or confiscated around 10 of its trucks.

"In many of these incidents, WFP was able to recover the food after negotiations through third parties, but truck drivers have become more reluctant to drive on some roads or deliver food assistance to risky areas," it explained.

Fuel shortages have also impacted WFP's ability to distribute aid, it said, adding that there were not enough humanitarian partners on the ground to help deliver the aid.

The WFP appeal came after UN aid chief Valerie Amos at the weekend asked the Syrian government to allow 10 additional aid organisations into the country to help the increasingly desperate population.

People on the ground are going hungry, Byrs added, saying there was a "bread crisis" because fuel shortages had forced bakeries to close.

WFP meanwhile said it aimed to help 1.5 million people by the end of this month.

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International News

Obama backs bill to ban assault weapons

WASHINGTON (AFP) - President Barack Obama on Tuesday threw his weight behind a bill to reintroduce a ban on civilians owning assault weapons, in the wake of a gun massacre in an elementary school that shocked the nation.

White House spokesman Jay Carney said the president would support a law proposed by Democratic Senator Dianne Feinstein to prohibit the arms, defined as certain types of semi-automatic firearm with removable magazines.

"He is actively supportive of, for example, Senator Feinstein's stated intent to revive a piece of legislation that would reinstate the assault weapons ban," Carney said, when asked what Obama would do about gun control.

Carney said Obama would also support any move to ban high-capacity clips -- magazines that hold dozens of rounds -- and close the so-called "gun show loophole" that allows unlicensed individuals to sell guns privately.

Feinstein vowed on Monday to bring the bill forward,

telling CNN: "It's going to be strong, and it's going to be definitive. And it's going to ban by name at least 100 military-style semi-automatic assault weapons."

A previous ten-year ban on military-style assault weapons was allowed to expire in 2004, and many US citizens have since rushed to arm themselves with semi-automatic versions of rifles like the Kalashnikov or the AR-15.

America has suffered an epidemic of gun violence over the last three decades, including 62 mass shooting sprees since 1982, three of the deadliest in the second half of this year alone.

The vast majority of weapons used have been semi-automatic handguns or military-style assault weapons obtained legally by the killers.

There were an estimated 310 million non-military firearms in the United States as of 2009, one for each citizen. People in America are 20 times more likely to be killed by a gun than is someone in another developed country.

Gun control petition breaks White House record

WASHINGTON (AFP) - In just three days since the Newtown school shooting, more than 150,000 people have signed a petition calling on US President Barack Obama to produce legislation that limits access to guns.

Support for the gun control drive, posted on the White House "We the People" website on Friday, neared 158,000 signatures at around 2200 GMT on Monday, already a new record for such a petition.

"Powerful lobbying groups allow the ownership of guns to reach beyond the Constitution's intended purpose of the right to bear arms," it says, referring to groups like the country's powerful National Rifle Association (NRA).

"Therefore, Congress must act on what is stated law, and face the reality that access to firearms reaches beyond what the Second Amendment intends to achieve," says the petition, available at www.whitehouse.gov.

"The signatures on this petition represent a collective demand for a bipartisan discussion resulting in a set of laws that regulates how a citizen obtains a gun," it says.

The United States is reeling from a massacre at an elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut on Friday that left 20 young children and six adults dead.

The shooter, who is also believed to have killed his mother at the house they shared before embarking on the school massacre, took his own life as police closed in.

Obama vowed Sunday at an emotional vigil in the grief-stricken New England town to use all his power to stop such gun massacres happening

again, saying "these tragedies must end."

But there is talk of a drive to renew a ban on assault weapons which expired in 2004, and of limits on the availability and size of fast-firing magazines.

An assault weapon ban was passed in 1994 under president Bill Clinton but it expired in 2004 and was never resurrected. Obama supported restoring the law while running for president in 2008 but did not make it a priority during his first term.



CARTAGENA : Colombian police officers guard packages of cocaine to be shown to the press in Cartagena de Indias, on December 17, 2012. The anti-narcotics unit of the National Police seized a 1,500 kg-shipment of cocaine that was to be shipped to Honduras, en route to the US. The cocaine has an estimated value of \$5 million.

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Health & Living

Belgium looks at euthanasia for minors, Alzheimer's sufferers

BRUSSELS (AFP) - Belgium is considering a significant change to its decade-old euthanasia law that would allow minors and Alzheimer's sufferers to seek permission to die.

The proposed changes to the law were submitted to parliament Tuesday by the Socialist party and are likely to be approved by other parties, although no date has yet been put forward for a parliamentary debate.

The draft legislation calls for "the law to be extended to minors if they are capable of discernment or affected by an incurable illness or suffering that we cannot alleviate."

Belgium was the second country in the world after the Netherlands to legalise euthanasia in 2002 but it applies only to people over the age of 18.

Socialist Senator Philippe

Mahoux, who helped draft the proposed changes, said there had been cases of adolescents who "had the capacity to decide" their future.

He said parliamentarians would also consider extended mercy-killing to people suffering from Alzheimer's-type illnesses.

Euthanasia was allowed to an Alzheimer's patient for the first time in the Netherlands last year.

In Belgium, some 1,133 cases -- mostly for terminal cancer -- were recorded in 2011, about one percent of all deaths in the country, according to official figures.

A seriously ill prisoner serving a long jail sentence this year became the first inmate to die under Belgium's euthanasia laws.

British judge rules against mother in child cancer case

LONDON (AFP) - A judge ruled Tuesday that a seven-year-old British boy with cancer could undergo more surgery despite his mother's opposition, which had led her to run away with her son earlier this month.

High Court judge David Bodey ruled that Neon Roberts, who has already had surgery on a brain tumour, should have another operation after hearing from doctors that he would very likely die soon without treatment.

The boy's mother Sally Roberts, 37, had refused to give her consent, telling the court: "I feel I need more expert opinion on it before proceeding."

But a doctor treating Neon said a scan showed more surgery needed to be carried out "urgently", saying there was a residual tumour left behind

from the first operation. He said a second doctor agreed with his analysis.

The judge had been due to decide whether Neon should undergo radiotherapy treatment following surgery, which his mother had also opposed, but that issue was put on hold pending a ruling on the operation.

Sally Roberts has been locked in a legal dispute with her estranged husband Ben over the boy's condition and treatment, and earlier this month she went on the run with Neon in what she later said was a panicked move to protect him.

The New Zealander says she fears radiotherapy would cause her son long-term harm.

The pair were found safe after a judge ordered a search and Roberts apologised for her actions.



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Deadly year for journalists worldwide: watchdog



NEW YORK (AFP) - The year 2012 is likely to be one of the deadliest for journalists around the world, with at least 67 killed while doing their jobs, a US-based media rights group said Tuesday.

The Committee to Protect Journalists said the number of deaths is up 42 percent from last year, due in large part to the Syria conflict, shootings in Somalia, violence in Pakistan and killings of reporters in Brazil.

"With 67 journalists killed in direct relation to their work

by mid-December, 2012 is on track to become one of the deadliest years since CPJ began keeping detailed records in 1992," the New York-based committee said.

The worst year on record for journalist killings was 2009, when 74 individuals were confirmed dead because of their work, nearly half of them slain in a massacre in Maguindanao province, Philippines, according to CPJ.

CPJ also said it was investigating the deaths of 30 additional journalists in 2012 to establish whether they were work-related.

"Internet journalists were hit harder than ever, while the proportion of freelancers was again higher than the historical average," the group said in its yearly report.

Syria was by far the deadliest country in 2012, with 28 journalists killed in combat or targeted for murder by govern-

ment or opposition forces, CPJ said.

In addition, one journalist covering the Syrian conflict was killed just over the border in Lebanon.

Worldwide, the vast majority of victims, 94 percent, were local journalists covering events in their own countries, a proportion roughly in line with historical figures.

Four international journalists were killed in 2012, all of them in Syria: Marie Colvin, an American who wrote for the Sunday Times of London; French freelance photographer Remi Ochlik; France 2 reporter Gilles Jacquier; and Japan Press journalist Mika Yamamoto.

Last year, Geneva-based Press Emblem Campaign said at least 106 journalists were killed in 2011, among them 20 who reported on the Arab spring uprising.



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Sci-Tech

Apple losses bid for US ban on Samsung smart-phones



SAN FRANCISCO (AFP) - A judge late Monday denied Apple's request to ban a set of Samsung smartphones from the US market after a jury found the South Korean electronics titan guilty of patent infringement.

Even though Apple was victorious in the patent case, the iPhone and iPad maker failed to prove that the technology at issue was the driving factor in people's buying decisions, US District Court Judge Lucy Koh said in her ruling.

"Though the phones do contain infringing features, they contain a far greater number of non-infringing features to which consumers would no longer have access if this court were to issue an injunction," Koh said.

Koh said that it would not be in the public interest to deprive consumers of smartphones for "non-core features" covered by the patents involved.

The injunction sought by Apple was "extremely broad," covering 26 Samsung products as well as devices the company might launch in the future incorporating features protected by the patents, the judge noted.

Samsung -- the world's top mobile and smartphone maker -- was ordered by a US jury in August to pay Apple \$1.05 billion in damages for illegally copying iPhone and iPad features for its flagship Galaxy S smartphones.

It has appealed the ruling.

Since then, two separate rulings by courts in Japan and the Netherlands have dismissed Apple's claims of patent infringement.

EU puts 1.2 bn euros into pilot renewable energy projects

BRUSSELS (AFP) - The European Commission announced Tuesday that it was putting 1.2 billion euros (\$1.56 billion) into renewable energy demonstration projects but had found no carbon capture ventures to back.

EU Climate Change Commissioner Connie Hedegaard said the funding came in part from the EU's carbon trading system, so that in effect polluters were paying, while the private sector would provide another 2.0 billion euros investment.

"This will help the EU keep its front-runner position on renewables and create jobs here and now, in the EU," Hedegaard said.

gaard said.

The "aim is to successfully demonstrate technologies that will subsequently help scale-up production from renewable sources across the EU substantially."

Construction work on the 23 projects will generate several thousand jobs and require 1,000 full-time employees once operational.

Hedegaard said it was unfortunate that no Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) projects, where CO2 gas blamed for global warming is collected and stored to minimise the environmental impact, made it to the funding stage in this round.

The 275 million euros set aside for CCS will accordingly be available in a second programme, she added.

EU leaders agreed in 2007 to have 12 CCS demonstration projects in operation by 2015 as the bloc seeks to take the lead in combatting climate change.

Those plans suffered a serious setback earlier this month when the world's biggest steel-maker ArcelorMittal said it was withdrawing from the Ucloos CCS project at its plant in Florange, France.

Its decision meant that all EU CCS projects mooted for this year had failed to make the grade.





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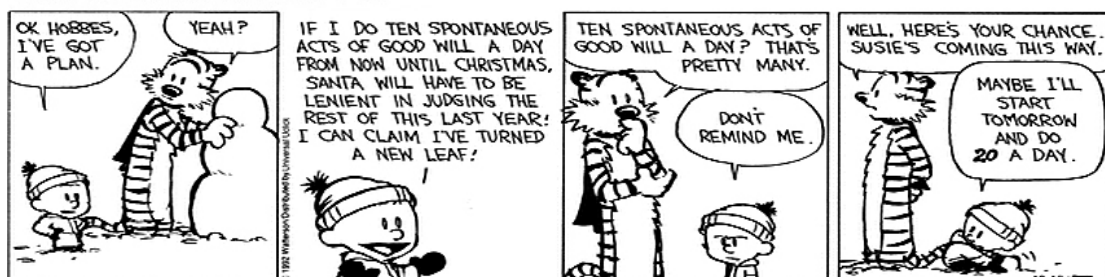
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RANK AND NAME

ACROSS

1. Pops
5. Indonesian island
9. White sale purchase
14. Land of mullahs
15. Like some fine wines
16. Breath mint brand
17. Tractor-trailer
18. Italian gift
19. Skirt shape
20. Secret identity of Steve Rogers
23. Abbr. after Schwarzkopf's name
24. Critic Reed
25. Enters traffic
29. Pellet
31. ___-Locka, Florida
34. Earthling, to a

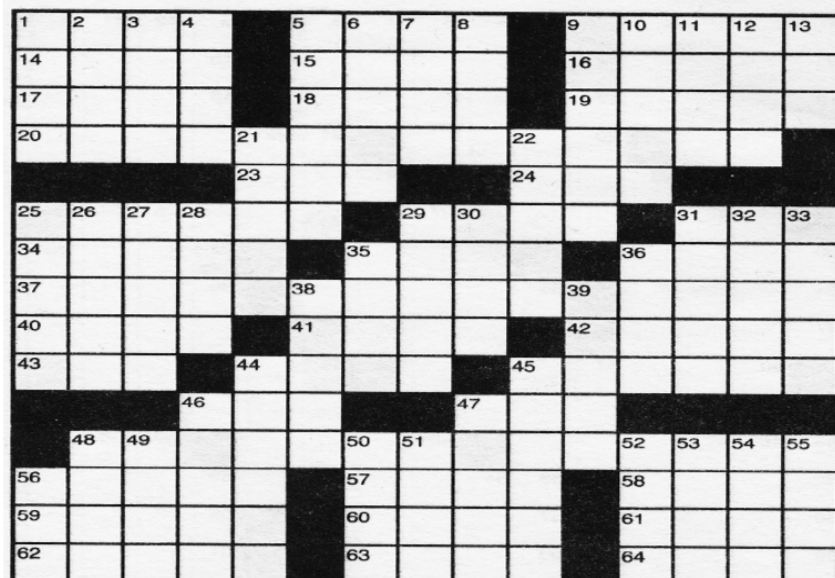
35. Martian
36. The lot of Lot's wife
37. "Treasure Island" character
40. Philippine sweetsop
41. The Corleone played by Brando
42. Elevated home
43. Small growth
44. Serape
45. Ermines
46. Diego or Fernando
47. Spire ornament
48. Shirley Temple film
56. Proofreader's plant
57. Change course
58. Genealogical construct

59. Will Durant's coauthor
60. Circle segments
61. By and by
62. "Sling ___"
63. Observe
64. One of the Cartwright sons

DOWN

1. Record
2. Type of code
3. Moist
4. Crab's mood
5. Little tax-deductions
6. Jerry Maguire, e.g.
7. ___ the Hyena
8. The same: Lat.
9. ___ stiff
10. Curved fold of the ear rim
11. Comic Idle
12. Lab burner

13. "Prufrock" poet's monogram
21. Sports site
22. Poetic Muse
25. Long-tailed parrot
26. Make ecstatic
27. Become ready for picking
28. Procures
29. Moistens a turkey
30. Dagwood's annoying neighbor boy
31. The Phantom's hangout
32. Little, to Lili
33. Contributes a share
35. Sound of a working barber
36. Promise or Parkway
38. The Donald's first ex
39. Pliny's tongue
44. Livestock
45. Meager
46. Exceed the road limit
47. Tape deck button
48. Switzer of "Our Gang"
49. Diva's dazzler
50. Financier Boesky
51. Claudius's successor
52. Brigham Young's destination
53. German poet Holz
54. Old cars
55. Longings
56. Trucking locale



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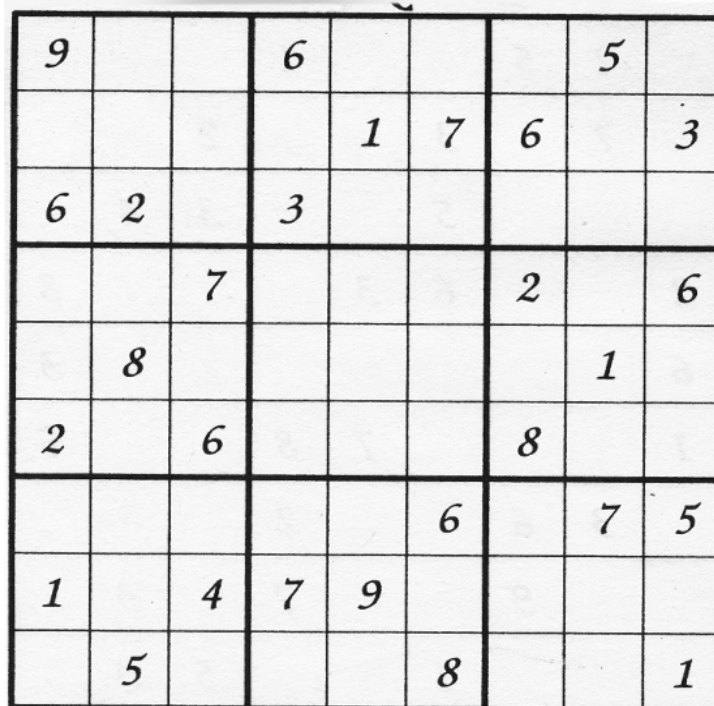
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Sudoku



SOLUTION

1	9	6	8	5	7	2	3	4
2	8	5	6	4	7	9	1	3
3	6	2	3	1	7	6	5	4
4	7	1	5	9	2	6	8	3
5	8	4	6	7	8	1	5	2
6	5	1	2	8	9	4	6	7
7	2	9	1	6	5	7	8	3
8	3	7	4	2	9	1	6	5
9	4	3	1	2	8	9	4	6

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9
A number is Never repeated in a row or column.
In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9



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Finance

Republicans offer 'Plan B' in US fiscal cliff talks

WASHINGTON (AFP) - House Speaker John Boehner said Tuesday he would introduce a bill extending tax breaks for all Americans making under \$1 million, a Republican fall-back strategy in the event a "fiscal cliff" deal falls through.

"I believe it's important that we protect as many American taxpayers as we can, and our 'Plan B' is to protect the American taxpayers who make \$1 million or less, and have all of their current rates extended," Boehner told reporters after laying out his plan to the Republican caucus.

"Time is running short," Boehner's office quoted him as telling his caucus in a Tuesday morning meeting, referring to the year-end deadline to work out a deal or have \$500 billion in taxes hikes and crippling spending cuts kick in.

The strategy was swiftly rejected by the White House.

"The parameters of a deal are clear, and the president is willing to continue to work with Republicans to reach a bipartisan solution that averts the fiscal cliff," press secretary Jay Carney said in a statement.

"But he is not willing to accept a deal that doesn't ask enough of the very wealthiest in taxes and instead shifts the burden to the middle class and seniors.

"The speaker's 'Plan B' approach doesn't meet this test because it can't pass the Senate and therefore will not protect middle class families, and does little to address our fiscal chal-

lenges with zero spending cuts."

Obama, Carney said, remained "hopeful that both sides can work out remaining differences and reach a solution so we don't miss the opportunity in front of us today."

Democrats have long called for Boehner to bring a bill to the House floor that extends Bush-era tax cuts for households making under \$250,000 per year, the cut-off point for President Barack Obama's tax hikes that he has demanded as part of any year-end deal to avoid the so-called fiscal cliff.

But Obama offered a concession to Boehner on Monday, raising his threshold at which higher rates would come into force to households earning \$400,000 a year and above.

Boehner's office welcomed the narrowing of positions, but the speaker made it clear that there was no deal yet.

Boehner described the latest White House offer as including \$1.3 trillion in new revenues, with \$850 billion in net spending reductions.

Asked what he wanted to see in an acceptable package,

Boehner did not hesitate.

"I've made it clear to the president that I would put a trillion dollars worth of revenue on the table if he were willing to put a trillion dollars of spending reductions on the table. That at this point would be my version of a balanced approach."

While the White House has shown no sign it would accept the \$1 million tax level, there is evidence it might have support from some Democrats, notably House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi.

In May she wrote Boehner a letter urging him to introduce legislation that maintained the middle class tax cuts.

Republican Representative Cathy McMorris Rodgers sounded optimistic Tuesday that an overall deal could be reached in time.

Boehner and Obama have engaged in fevered negotiations in recent days, including a face-to-face meeting Monday at the White House and a phone call later that night, in a bid to prevent tax hikes on all Americans and massive spending cuts from kicking in on January 1.

Toyota to pay record US safety fine

WASHINGTON (AFP) - Toyota Motor will pay a record \$17.35 million dollar fine for failing to promptly notify US authorities about a safety defect on 2010 Lexus models, a federal agency said.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said Toyota had agreed to pay the penalty, the maximum fine allowable under the law, "in response to the agency's assertion that the automaker failed to report a safety defect to the federal government in a timely manner."

Toyota announced in late June the recall in the United States of 154,000 2010 Lexus RX 350 and RX 450h to fix a problem with the floor mat that could trap the accelerator pedal, causing undesired acceleration.

The NHTSA noted the company's recall came after it had contacted Toyota in May about a trend in floor mat pedal entrapment in 2010 Lexus RX 350s.

A month later, Toyota told the agency it was aware of 63 alleged incidents of the problem since 2009, it said.

Under US federal law, all auto manufacturers must no-

tify the NHTSA within five business days of determining that a safety defect exists or that the vehicle is non-compliant with US auto safety standards and to promptly conduct a recall.

"Safety is our highest priority," said US Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. "With today's announcement, I expect Toyota to rigorously reinforce its commitment to adhering to United States safety regulations."

Toyota, in a separate statement, said it would make the payment "without admitting to any violation of its obligations under the US Safety Act."

The last time the Japanese automaker faced US civil penalties was in 2010, when it agreed to pay \$48.8 million as a result of three separate investigations of its handling of vehicle recalls.

Toyota paid maximum civil penalties for violations stemming from pedal entrapment, sticky accelerator pedals and steering relay rod recalls, the NHTSA said.

Shares in Toyota were up 2.8 percent at \$88.99 in mid-day trade on the New York Stock Exchange.

China sees gloomy 2013 foreign trade environment

BEIJING (AFP) - China said Tuesday it faces a bleak foreign trade environment in 2013 due to ongoing global economic weakness, as the Asian export powerhouse appears set to miss this year's trade growth target.

Beijing set its 2012 target for total trade growth at 10 percent, but admitted recently that it was unlikely to be achieved, blaming sluggish overseas demand, particularly in Japan and the debt-laden eurozone.

In the first 11 months of the year, total trade rose just 5.8 percent from the same period in 2011 to \$3.5 trillion, with exports up 7.3 percent to \$1.8 trillion, official data showed.

Shen Danyang, spokesman at the Ministry of Commerce,

said at a regular news conference Tuesday that exporters in the world's second-largest economy would probably have another tough year.

"There is no reason for optimism about China's foreign trade environment and barriers that could keep foreign trade growth from rising steadily remain big."

Shen said that trade friction between the world's largest exporter and its major trade partners intensified this year, noting there have been 53 trade probes against China in 2012 worth \$24.2 billion.

Last year, China came under 69 trade investigations worth \$5.9 billion, according to previous government figures.



BRUSSELS (AFP) - The Marco Polo, flying a British flag and said to be the world's biggest container ship by French owners CMA CGM, was given its champagne christening in the Belgian port of Zeebrugge on Tuesday. The ship, which is 396 metres (yards) long -- the length of four football fields -- was built in South Korea and was to head back to Asia after a stop in France. It is said to be the largest container in the world measured by capacity, as it can hold 16,020 TEU (twenty-foot equivalent unit containers) -- or 97 kilometres of containers lined up one by one. CMA CGM has commissioned two more of the same tonnage expected to be delivered next spring and each costing between 150 and 200 million euros.

YESTERDAY'S Crossword Answer

F	A	L	A	B	A	I	T	E	G	O	S
O	L	E	S	S	E	T	T	O	M	E	L
W	A	S	H	I	N	G	T	O	N	P	L
L	D	S	D	O	E	S	E	D	I	T	O
R	I	O	T	A	L	A	R				
B	L	O	O	D	C	L	E	M	E	N	T
E	R	E	C	T	B	O	A	S	S	O	R
R	A	N	K	C	L	A	N	S	T	R	E
E	S	T	E	L	A	S	S	P	A	S	S
S	O	F	T	E	S	T	H	A	T	E	S
E	R	A	S	C	A	P	E				
R	A	G	L	A	N	S	E	R	E	S	S
O	R	A	L	S	T	P	A	T	R	I	C
M	I	L	E	E	R	A	S	E	L	O	I
P	A	A	R	R	I	T	E				

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Doomsday cult arrests surpass 400 in China

BEIJING (AFP) - China is stepping up a crackdown on "evil" cults, detaining more than 400 members of the "Almighty God" doomsday sect in just one province, with scores of others held nationwide.

The Christian-inspired group has been accused of spreading doomsday rumours apparently linked to the ancient Mayan calendar and urging followers to fight a "decisive battle" to slay the "red dragon" of communism, reports said.

More than 400 followers of

the sect, also known as "Oriental Lightning", have been detained in the remote northwestern province of Qinghai since last week with large amounts of printed and digital materials confiscated, state broadcaster China Central Television (CCTV) said.

On Monday, Xinhua news agency said 37 members of "Almighty God" had been detained in Qinghai, while 56 others had been detained around China for prophesying the end of the world on December 21, when the Mayan Long Count calendar expires.

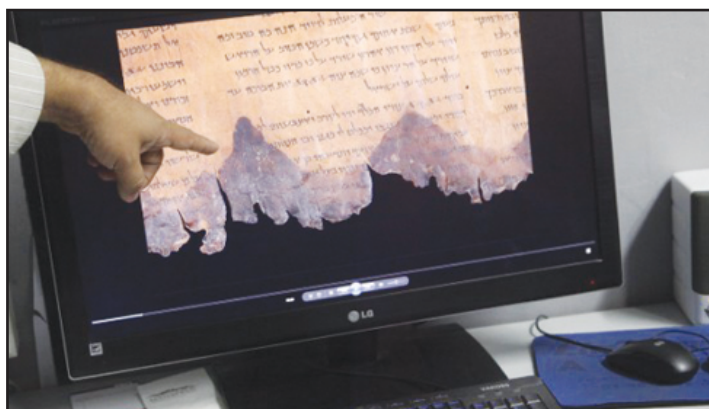
"The investigation into the 'Almighty God' evil sect forms an important aspect of our maintenance stability work and we will closely link it up with our anti-self-immolation fight," CCTV cited Qinghai police as saying.

The comment was a reference to nearly 100 Tibetans setting themselves on fire since 2009 in protest at China's rule of its Tibetan-inhabited regions, which include Qinghai.

China's ruling Communist Party does not tolerate challenges to its authority and has brutally cracked down on religious groups that refuse to toe the party line, including the Buddhist-inspired Falun Gong, which was banned in the late 1990s.

China has a long history of religiously-inspired anti-government movements, most notably the nineteenth century "Taiping Heavenly Kingdom", led by a Christian convert who gathered hundreds of thousands of followers in an attempt to overthrow the emperor.

Dead Sea scrolls go online



JERUSALEM (AFP) - Thousands of images from the Dead Sea scrolls, which date back more than two millennia, were on Tuesday made available to the world on a joint Israel Antiquities Authority and Google website.

The new website <http://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/> aims to make "the most important archaeological finds of the 20th century accessible to both scholars and the general public," an IAA statement said.

Using technology developed for NASA, the website offers high-resolution images of the ancient scrolls along with an advanced search engine.

The IAA is in the process of uploading images of the 900 biblical and other manuscripts, comprising some 30,000 fragments, which were discovered between 1947 and 1956 in the Qumran caves above the Dead Sea and photographed in their entirety with infra-red technology in the 1950s.

The parchment and papyrus scrolls contain Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic script, and include several of the earliest-known texts from the Bible, including the oldest surviving copy of the Ten Commandments.

The oldest of the documents dates to the third century BC and the most recent to about 70 AD, when Roman troops destroyed the Second Jewish Temple in Jerusalem.

The artefacts are housed at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, where the larger pieces are shown at the dimly lit Shrine of the Book on a rotational basis in order to minimise damage from exposure.

When not on show, they are kept in a dark, climate-controlled storeroom in conditions similar to those in the Qumran caves, where the humidity, temperature and darkness preserved the scrolls for two millennia.

Scorsese to make Bill Clinton documentary

LOS ANGELES (AFP) - Veteran filmmaker Martin Scorsese is to make a documentary about Bill Clinton, describing the former US president as "a towering figure" on the world stage.

Scorsese, who has made award-winning films about Bob Dylan and former Beatle George Harrison, will have Clinton's full cooperation on the project with cable broadcaster HBO.

"A towering figure who remains a major voice in world issues, president Clinton continues to shape the political dialogue both here and around the world," said the director.

"Through intimate conversations, I hope to provide greater insight into this transcendent figure," he added.

Clinton added: "I am pleased that legendary director Martin Scorsese and HBO have agreed to do this film ... I look forward to sharing my perspective on my years as president, and my work in the years since, with HBO's audience."

Scorsese, whose fictional dramas include "Taxi Driver" and "Goodfellas," won a primetime Emmy for the small screen film "No Direction Home" in 2005 about Dylan, and two for 2011's "George Harrison: Living in the Material World."

Clinton was US president from 1993 to 2001. After leaving the White House he set up the William J. Clinton Foundation, which fosters public-private projects in a range of areas including health-care, the economy and the environment.



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Aruba's newest and most innovative gated community has enjoyed steady sales since breaking ground, as many are finding the secure surroundings and outstanding amenities are just what they were looking for before considering purchasing property on the island. Some owners are using the villas or town homes as vacation retreats rather than full time and are taking advantage of Gold Coast's rental services to turn their investment into ready income.

"The greater portion of home owners are using their 'home away from home' in Aruba to escape the winter months, or spend holidays with the family on the island," noted Gold Coast developer Fito Croes. To assist in the demand for more complete facilities for groups and families, famed hotelier Ed Ma-lone has been placed in charge of the rental program.

Staying at Gold Coast is a very attractive proposition for those traveling with groups that would require multiple hotel rooms. Two and three bedroom Villas or Town Homes accommodate large numbers and offer extensive amenities along with a final cost resulting in considerable savings. The community is minutes to the best beaches and all the casino action, and offers a quiet and secluded getaway with two swimming pools and specialized services with more on the way, such as a fitness room, tennis courts and mini-mall. Ed can arrange maid service, babysitters,

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Concierge services to arrange rental cars, spa appointments, activities and restaurant reservations are all part of the package.

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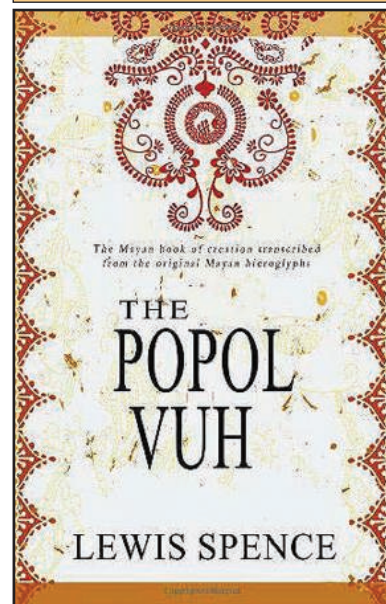
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Popol Vuh: the Mayan holy book



minds of the Earth-Water deities, Tepeu and Gucumatz," the book says.

Its precise origin remains a mystery. Historians believe it was first put down on paper in the Quiche language by Christianized Indians in the middle of the 16th century but the author of the original text is not known.

The text remained secret until 1701, when Spanish priest Francisco Ximenez produced a Spanish translation. That manuscript is currently in the Newberry library in Chicago.

On December 21, millions of Mayan descendants will flock to southern Mexico and central America to mark the end of a 5,200-year cycle on the Mayan "Long Count" calendar -- a celebration for most, but doomsday for some believers.

The Ximenez version of the Popol Vuh held by the Newberry is the oldest known version.

In Guatemala, where the book was declared a piece of intangible national cultural heritage in August, some lawmakers say they plan to press for the return of the manuscript.

They want to place the work on display in a museum in the indigenous town of Chichicastenango in the El Quiche department of western Guatemala.

GUATEMALA CITY (AFP) - Before the creation of the Earth, there was only silence and darkness, only the sky and the sea until the deities Tepeu and Gucumatz created trees, animals and man -- so says the Mayan holy book.

The Popol Vuh is a spiritual and philosophical book that explains the creation of the world. Even today, it plays an important role in defining the identity of ethnic Mayas in Mexico and central America.

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SPORTS

Football: Mainz inflict more pain on out of form Schalke 04



Schalke's Peruvian striker Jefferson Farfan and Mainz midfielder Marco Caligiuri vie for the ball

BERLIN (AFP) - Schalke 04 continued their dismal run of form as the 2011 German Cup winners crashed out of this season's competition beaten 2-1 by Second Division Mainz

in their round of last 16 clash on Tuesday.

Jens Keller saw his reign as caretaker coach get off to the worst possible start, since taking over from Huub Stevens

on Sunday, as an 83rd minute winner from Nicolai Muller proved the difference.

Schalke, who topped their group in the Champions League, went behind on the half-hour mark when Marco Caligiuri opened the scoring, but they levelled the match with 15 minutes to go thanks to Dutch international Klaas-Jan Huntelaar.

Muller then added insult to injury for Schalke with his late winner leaving the hosts with just the Champions League to play for as thanks to a run of just two points from their last 18 in the Bundesliga they are 17 points adrift of leaders Bayern Munich.

Bayern Munich are in action later against Augsburg and Kickers Offenbach take on Fortuna Dusseldorf.

Alpine skiing: Hirscher storms to victory in slalom



Austria's Marcel Hirscher (C) celebrates next to second placed Germany's Felix Neureuther (L) and third placed Japan's Naoki Yuasa

MADONNADI CAMPIGLIO (AFP) - Austria's defending World Cup overall champion Marcel Hirscher won his second race of the season in dominant fashion as he won the slalom here on Tuesday.

The 23-year-old - who had previously won the giant

slalom at Val d'Isere - eased to victory, timing 1min 42.50sec over the two legs to continue his run of seven podium finishes in seven races this season.

He is the first skier to achieve that in the technical events since the great Italian

Alberto Tomba in the 1991/92 season.

Germany's Felix Neureuther finished second 1.67sec adrift while Japanese skier Naoki Yuasa took a surprise third spot, 2.28sec off the pace - the first skier from Japan to finish in the top three of a World Cup race since another slalom specialist Akira Sasaki was second at the Japanese resort of Shigakogen in 2006.

Hirscher had set the fastest time in the first leg, timing 0.06sec quicker than Neureuther while Italian Cristian Deville was third.

Yuasa was one of the early skiers on the second leg but he posted such a competitive time that it forced several racers to take risks with Deville the highest profile casualty, as he crashed out.

Sports: Wiggins named BBC Sports Personality of the Year



LONDON (AFP) - Tour de France winner and Olympic time-trial champion Bradley Wiggins was named BBC Sports Personality of the Year at a star-studded live ceremony in London on Sunday.

The 32-year-old cyclist won ahead of Olympic heptathlon champion Jessica Ennis, while tennis player Andy Murray, who triumphed at the Olympics and the US Open, came third in the annual public poll, which received 1.5 million votes.

"I'm just going to say thank you very much for everyone who picked the phone up and voted," said Wiggins, who became the first British winner of the Tour de France and took his tally of Olympic gold medals to four at the London Games.

The ceremony capped a

memorable year for sport in Great Britain, which was recognised when the country's Olympic and Paralympic squad -- who between them won 185 medals during the London Games -- were named Team of the Year.

Dave Brailsford was named Coach of the Year for masterminding Wiggins' Tour de France triumph as head of Team Sky and then overseeing a haul of eight gold medals for the host nation's cyclists at the Olympics.

The Overseas Personality of the Year award went to Jamaica's Usain Bolt, who repeated his 100m-200m-4x100m relay triple from the 2008 Beijing Olympics to cement his legacy as the world's greatest ever sprinter.

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weekends**

NFL: Sputtering Jets eliminated from playoff race

NASHVILLE, Tennessee (AFP) - The New York Jets and their tortured offense let their slim playoff hopes slip away, losing 14-10 to the Tennessee Titans as quarterback Mark Sanchez threw four interceptions.

Chris Johnson rushed for 122 yards and scored a touchdown on 21 carries for the Titans who played the role of spoilers Monday night.

Titan quarterback Jake Locker completed 13-of-22 passes for 149 yards to go with 43 rushing yards on seven carries for the Titans, who halted a three-game losing skid.

Tennessee improved to 5-9 but are going to miss the post-season for the fourth-consecu-



tive season.

The Jets needed to win their last three games to have a shot at a playoff spot, but Sanchez's dismal performance and their anemic offense Monday ended any chance of that.

The Jets appeared to be mounting a comeback but Sanchez bungled a snap with the Jets deep in Tennessee zone with under a minute remaining.

After the game, Ryan refused to name his starting

quarterback for the next contest.

Sanchez, who has struggled mightily this season, completed just 13-of-28 passes for 131 yards with a touchdown.

The Titans are just playing out the season but they now lead the all-time series against the Jets 22-17-1.

Tennessee was also playing without tight end Jared Cook, who is out with a torn right rotator cuff.



NEW YORK (AFP) - The New York Mets traded R.A. Dickey to the Toronto Blue Jays on Monday, just one month after the knuckleballer won Major League Baseball's Cy Young Award as the top pitcher in the National League. Dickey, who published an autobiography in March, was unable to come to terms on a new contract with the Mets. The 38-year-old Dickey had a career year in 2012, winning the Cy Young after posting a record of 20-6 with a 2.73 earned run average and 230 strikeouts. Dickey had not won more than 11 games in a season previously in his nine-year MLB career. Dickey is the first pitcher to be traded following a Cy Young award-winning season since Roger Clemens in 1999.



KUWAIT CITY (AFP) : Syrian football fans and supporters of President Bashar al-Assad wave their national flag and a picture of the embattled President during Syria's semi-final football match against Bahrain in the 7th West Asia Football Federation (WAFF) championship in Kuwait City on December 18, 2012. Syria won the match in a penalty shoot-out and go on to face Iraq in the final.



MADONNA DI CAMPIGLIO (AFP) : Czech Krystof Kryzl competes during the Men's World Cup Slalom on December 18, 2012 in Madonna di Campiglio, Italy.

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NBA: 'Linsanity' powers Rockets past Knicks

NEW YORK (AFP) - Jeremy Lin put together another signature performance at Madison Square Garden as the Houston Rockets defeated his former team, the Knicks, 109-96 in his first game back in New York.

Lin, who took the basketball world by storm during last season's "Linsanity," scored 22 points and had eight assists on Monday night as Houston handed the Knicks their first loss of the season at home.

The sellout crowd at the Garden gave Lin a loud ovation during the pre-game introductions.

James Harden scored a team-high 28 points and grabbed 10 boards for the Rockets, who snapped a seven-game road losing streak.

It was the second time this year the Rockets beat the Knicks, who were unable to keep pace on Monday. The Rockets outscored the Knicks 54-29 over the second and third quarters.

Chris Copeland notched a career-best 29 points for the Knicks, who had a 12-game

unbeaten streak at home dating back to last season.

Copeland, who was starting in place of injured Carmelo Anthony, scored all of his points in the second half.

Lin is one of the few Asian Americans in NBA history, and the first American of Taiwanese descent to play in the league.

The talented point guard and Harvard University graduate parlayed his success last season with the Knicks into a generous free agent contract with Houston.

The Los Angeles-born Lin averaged 2.6 points per game before joining New York, then exploded in the winter of 2012. Between February 4 and February 22, Lin averaged 23.9 points per game, sparking the "Linsanity" phenomenon.

He became the toast of the basketball world, appearing on the cover of "Sports Illustrated" in consecutive weeks.

The only other NBA players to do that are Dirk Nowitzki and Michael Jordan.

Lin was named in Time magazine's 2012 list of the "Top 100 Most Influential People in the World."

The Knicks failed to match Lin's contract offer from the Rockets for about \$25 million over three years.

Knicks star Anthony called the offer "ridiculous."

New York could have matched the offer for Lin, but the team had other plans.

They boasted an impressive 18-5 record heading into Monday's game, but that didn't intimidate Lin, who apparently wanted to show management and Anthony that they had made a mistake by letting him go.

The Rockets headed into Madison Square Garden with a respectable record of 11-12 but they have had a trying year.

They had to deal with the death of head coach Kevin McHale's 23-year-old daughter Sasha, and first-round pick Royce White is being treated for an anxiety disorder.

It hasn't been an easy year for Lin either. He excelled under former Knicks coach Mike D'Antoni, who used an up-tempo, point guard-based system. Under McHale, Lin's numbers are down.

Heading into Monday's game, Lin was averaging just 10.8 points and 6.0 assists this season.

Until Monday night, Lin's best performance was against the San Antonio Spurs last Monday, when he scored 38 points and had seven assists in a losing cause.



Messi extends contract at Barcelona

MADRID (AFP) - Barcelona's star Argentinian striker Lionel Messi has pledged to stay with the Spanish giants until June 2018 by renewing his contract, the club said Tuesday.

Barcelona are 13 points clear of their fierce rivals, title holders Real Madrid, at the top of the Spanish league, and nine points ahead of second-placed Atletico Madrid, whom they beat 4-1 last weekend.

The Argentinian is in the running for a fourth Ballon D'Or, world player-of-the-year award this year, alongside his Barcelona team mate Andres Iniesta and his La Liga rival Ronaldo. The winner will be announced on January 7.

Messi is Barca's highest ever scorer, having broken Cesar Rodriguez's record from the 1950s.



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